

NEWS FROM ED MARKEY

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

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MARKEY, SHAYS INTRODUCE RESOLUTION CALLING FOR ANYTIME, ANYWHERE INSPECTIONS IN IRAN

Bill raises concerns about suspected Iranian nuclear weapons program

WASHINGTON, DC—Representative Edward Markey (D-MA), Co-Chair of the Bipartisan Taskforce on Nonproliferation and a Senior Member of the Energy and Commerce Committee and the Select Committee on Homeland Security, and Representative Christopher Shays (R-CT), Co-Chair of the Bipartisan Taskforce on Nonproliferation, Vice-Chairman of the Government Reform Committee and Chairman of the Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats and International Relations, today introduced a resolution calling for action by the U.S. and the international community to address the Islamic Republic of Iran's suspected nuclear weapons program.

"Iran seems to be violating the spirit, if not the letter, of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty by building nuclear facilities that could lead to the development and production of nuclear weapons," said Rep. Markey. "In our resolution, we call on the President, the United Nations, and other countries to urge Iran to accept an additional, safeguard-strengthening agreement that give the International Atomic Energy Agency far greater access to known and suspected sites in Iran. We need to end the proliferation of nuclear weapons in Iran before they get much further down that path."

Iran, with Russian assistance, is nearing completion of two light water reactors near Bushehr. Iran is also digging uranium mines, constructing uranium enrichment facilities and spent fuel reprocessing plants, which, when combined with the nuclear power plants, will allow the control of the entire nuclear fuel cycle. This could lead to the production of weapons grade plutonium and highly enriched uranium in only a few years. Further, Iranian President Khatami has publicly acknowledged his nation's pursuit of all of the necessary nuclear components for the construction of a nuclear bomb.

Iran has resisted, as recently as June 2, the mounting international pressure for it to sign an agreement that would allow anytime, anywhere inspections of all known and suspected nuclear facilities. Dr. Mohamed El Baradei, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), was able to perform a limited inspection of several Iranian nuclear sites in February, 2003, and was surprised by the progress made by the Iranians. Dr. El Baradei stated that Iran was now one of only 10 countries that are capable of building uranium-enriching gas centrifuges.

G-8 Leaders said they, "will not ignore the proliferation implications of Iran's advanced nuclear program." They stressed "the importance of Iran's full compliance with its obligations under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty", and offered their "strongest support to a comprehensive IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) examination of [Iran's] nuclear program."

The Resolution "Calling for Robust Inspections in Iran":

1. Expresses the concern of the House that Iran may be attempting to acquire nuclear weapons;
2. Calls on President Bush to urge Iran to accept an agreement that gives the IAEA the right to perform anytime, anywhere inspections of known and suspected nuclear facilities; and
3. Calls on Iran to demonstrate its commitment to the NPT and to peace and stability in the Middle East by accepting such an agreement.

Rep. Markey concluded, "Iran said yesterday that it would allow full inspections if U.S. sanctions against its nuclear programs were lifted. That's not how this game is played. Iran must first allow unfettered, anywhere, anytime inspections of all known and suspected nuclear facilities. Only when the U.S. is convinced that Iran's nuclear program is peaceful, and Iran has been removed from the State Department's list of state sponsors of terrorism, should we even consider lifting sanctions."

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